

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 HA-05 IO-13 MCT-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3544

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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LONDON FOR SEITZ

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, GH

SUBJ: UPDATE ON ARRESTS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS

REFS: (A) ACCRA 3006, (B) ACCRA 3395, (C) ACCRA 3169,

(D) ACCRA 3385

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO GOG, AT LEAST 43 OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE NOW UNDER ARREST, AN INCREASE OF 12 OVER LAST OFFICIAL ADMISSION. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, COURTS HERE DISMISSED APPLICATIONS ASKING RELEASE OF SIX PRISONERS AND RESERVED RULING ON APPLICATION INVOLVING TWO OTHER PRISONERS. NONE OF THESE POLITICAL PRISONERS HAS YET BEEN RELEASED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PREVENTIVE CUSTODY ORDERS NUMBER 8 AND 9, BOTH BACK DATED APRIL 20, GOG LISTS 12 ADDITIONAL OPPOSITION LEADERS WHO HAVE BEEN DETAINED SINCE EARLY APRIL. INDIVIDUALS ARE: KWASI AIKINS, JATOE KALCO, OWUSU SEKYERE, CAB AKRONG, MRS. MARY RAWLINS, E.D. KOM, FED PLANGE, J.A. YARBOE,
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HIRO HARIRAM, KONGORO, PROF. ADU BOAHEN, ISSAC WINNEY.
(ORDERS ALSO CLARIFY SPELLING OF NAMES FIVE INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED IN EARLIER PREVENTIVE CUSTODY DECREES -- J.E. JANTUAH ALIAS S.P. JANTUAH, DANIEL QUAKYI, DR. J.S. BILSON, RAY KAKRABA-QUARSHIE, AND F. A. JANTUAH.)

3. THESE 12 NEW NAMES, ADDED TO THE 17 GIVEN REF (A)

AND THE 14 GIVEN REF (B), INDICATE THAT GOG IS NOW HOLDING AT LEAST 43 POLITICAL PRISONERS, RATHER THAN THE 35 CLAIMED IN ITS APRIL 19 STATEMENT (REF C).

4. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS ON MAY 3 THE HO HIGH COURT DISMISSED EX PARTE APPLICATIONS BY GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION SEEKING RELEASE OF SIX PRISONERS -- RAY KAKRABA-QUARSHIE (ACCRA LAWYER), OWUSU SEKYERE (SUNYANI BUSINESSMEN), DR. JOHN S. BILSON (KUMASI DOCTOR AND FOUNDER OF SO-CALLED "THIRD FORCE"), T.B. BRODIE-MENDS (CAPE COAST LAWYER), DAVIS OR DAVID KWAKYE AND QUAYE MENSAH (AGE 82 AND BLIND). EXPLAINING HIS DECISION, MR. JUSTICE G.K. ANDOH POINTED OUT THAT BOTH THE RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL AND ITS STILL EXTANT PREDECESSOR, THE NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL, ARE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO ORDER THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF ANY PERSON IF THEY HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH ACTS WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH THE STATE AND THE PERSON TO BE DETAINED.

5. ON MAY 4 THE SEKONDI HIGH COURT RESERVED RULING UNTIL MAY 31 ON SIMILAR APPLICATIONS FOR K.A. GBEDEMA AND B.J. ROCHA (LEADERS OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE, THE GROUP WHICH OPPOSED HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG IN DISPUTED MARCH 30 REFERENDUM.) BOTH MEN ARE BEING HELD IN SEKONDI PRISON.

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6. COMMENT: AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NONE OF THE 43 POLITICAL PRISONERS HAS BEEN RELEASED TO DATE. WE HAVE CONVEYED FORMALLY TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OUR CONCERN OVER THESE ARRESTS (REF D). SMITH

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